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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNMIK](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [EU](#) [UY](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: RESOLVING KOSOVO'S STATUS IN  
EARLY 2008

REF: STATE 01087

Classified By: Ambassador Frank E. Baxter  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) A/DCM urged Uruguay to recognize Kosovo's independence once it is declared, per reftel instructions. The demarche was delivered on January 15 to the MFA's Director for Multilateral Affairs, Carlos Barros and his Chief of the International Organizations Department, Daniel Pareja.

¶2. (C) Barros was quite familiar with the countries of former Yugoslavia. He commented that on his last trip to the region he had witnessed first-hand the persistent animosity between countries such as Croatia and Montenegro. He made the following observations regarding Kosovo's status in early 2008:

-- Uruguay is not a member of the UN Security Council and it does not have any substantial interests in the Balkans. Because of its small diplomatic corps, the GOU tends to concentrate primarily on issues that directly impact Uruguay and "not long-running or complex issues at the UN that have minimal relevance to us." He cited Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Venezuela, Spain, Italy, Congo and Haiti as the nations which hold direct national/international interests for Uruguay.

-- Nonetheless, Barros said, the MFA is concerned about the countries of the former Yugoslavia that have no access to the sea because their "isolated condition" poses potential risk for future conflict. He cited Bolivia and Ethiopia as prime examples of countries where a lack of access to the sea remained a perennial source of contention with their neighbors who had sea coasts. He commented that an independent Kosovo was likely to result "in just another landlocked micro-state -- unless Kosovo decided to join up with Albania."

-- Barros said that the prospect of Kosovo eventually joining Albania might not please Russia, who viewed "all Muslim states in Europe" with grave suspicion." He added that "neutral countries like Uruguay" were naturally concerned when major changes were proposed in a region "where World War I began".

-- On the other hand, Barros said that Uruguay's MFA well understood that any attempt to reintegrate Kosovo into Serbia was a non-starter that would likely spark renewed violence. He characterized UN Special Envoy Ahtissari's plan as "the

lesser of two evils" and volunteered that the ethnic Serb minority in Kosovo would not favor independence.

-- In the final analysis, Barros said, Uruguay had no official position to offer at this time, but that it would eventually, probably follow Europe's and Latin America's lead on the Kosovo issue once it was clearly established. In any case, he doubted that Uruguay would take a high profile on the issue.

13. (C) Comment: A senior career diplomat with close ties to the opposition Colorado party, Barros was previously Ambassador to Italy and the Czech Republic, where he was also accredited to a number of countries, including Albania. He was candid in his remarks about which demarches the MFA took seriously. He did not discount the possibility that either Russia or Venezuela could alter his assessment of how Uruguay would react to Kosovo's independence "if the right people at the top of the MFA were persuaded to do otherwise". In previous meetings, Barros has been openly critical of Foreign Minister Reinaldo Gargano, particularly regarding the Minister's opposition to a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.

End Comment.  
Baxter